

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The rejections presented in the Office Action dated March 24, 2008 (hereinafter Office Action) have been considered. Claims 1, 2, 4-19, 24-59 and 61 remain pending in the application. Reconsideration of the pending claims and allowance of the application in view of the present response is respectfully requested.

1. In the Office Action Summary (PTOL-326), the Disposition of the Claims section shows Claims 2, 25-59, and 61 as being withdrawn from consideration. On page 2, paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that Claims 25-59 and 61 are withdrawn from further consideration. On page 2, paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner continues to reject Claims 1, 2, 4-24 and 41-61.

As a result of these inconsistencies, Applicant is unable to positively determine the status of the claims. In an attempt to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR § 1.121, the Applicants have annotated Claims 25-29 and 61 as withdrawn in the Listing of the Claims. Applicants request clarification of the proper status of the claims in the next official communication.

Further, Applicants again request withdrawal of the finality of the restriction requirement and rejoinder of Claims 25-29 and 61. As explained in the response to the Restriction Requirement filed on August 13, 2007, the restriction is improper. The Examiner has failed to meet the requisites of MPEP §806.05(j) in order to restrict claims based on related processes, as the record clearly shows there is no burden placed on the Examiner in examining these claims.

2. Applicants note the amendment to Claim 1. The amendment is not made for purposes relating to patentability, and is not made in response to prior art or any objections or rejections to the claims. Thus, the Applicant has not intended to narrow, nor has the Applicant narrowed, the scope of Claim 1 resulting from the amendment.

3. Claims 1, 2, 4-24 and 41-61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,047,051 to Ginzboorg et al. (hereinafter "Ginzboorg"). Applicants traverse the rejections.

In the Applicant's Response filed December 26, 2007, the Applicants amended Claim 1 to recite "wherein each of the bridge modules is configured with a subset of the rules assigned to the services managed by that bridge module, and one of the bridge modules is designated as a primary bridge module to receive the rules and distribute the subsets of rules to the remaining

bridge modules.” In the present Office Action, nowhere has the Examiner attempted to show that Ginzboorg teaches or suggests these features of Claim 1. Further, in prior Office Actions, the Examiner has not fully considered the language of the dependent claims from which these amendments are based, but has grouped the rejection of all claims into a common rejection, which is improper under MPEP §707.07(d).

“All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art.” MPEP § 2143.03. The Examiner has not considered at least the language of Claim 1 as previously presented, and as a result, the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4-24 is improper. Nowhere has the Examiner shown that Ginzboorg teaches or suggests bridge modules configured with a subset of the rules assigned to the services managed by that bridge module, and wherein one of the bridge modules is designated as a primary bridge module to receive the rules and distribute the subsets of rules to the remaining bridge modules. Nor has the Examiner set forth any rationale why claim limitations not taught by Ginzboorg would nonetheless be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Further, as the Examiner has indicated on page 2 of the Office Action, Claims 41-61 continue to be rejected as obvious in view of Ginzboorg, the rejection of these Claims 41-61 is improper. Claims 41-61 recite features that were not considered by the Examiner, nor are these features taught or suggested by Ginzboorg.

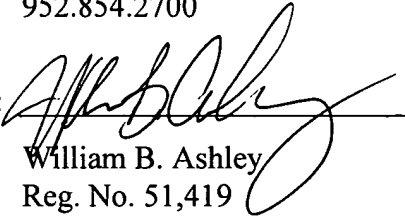
4. Authorization is given to charge Deposit Account No. 50-3581 (NOKI.002PA) any necessary fees for this filing. If the Examiner believes it necessary or helpful, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney to discuss any issues related to this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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